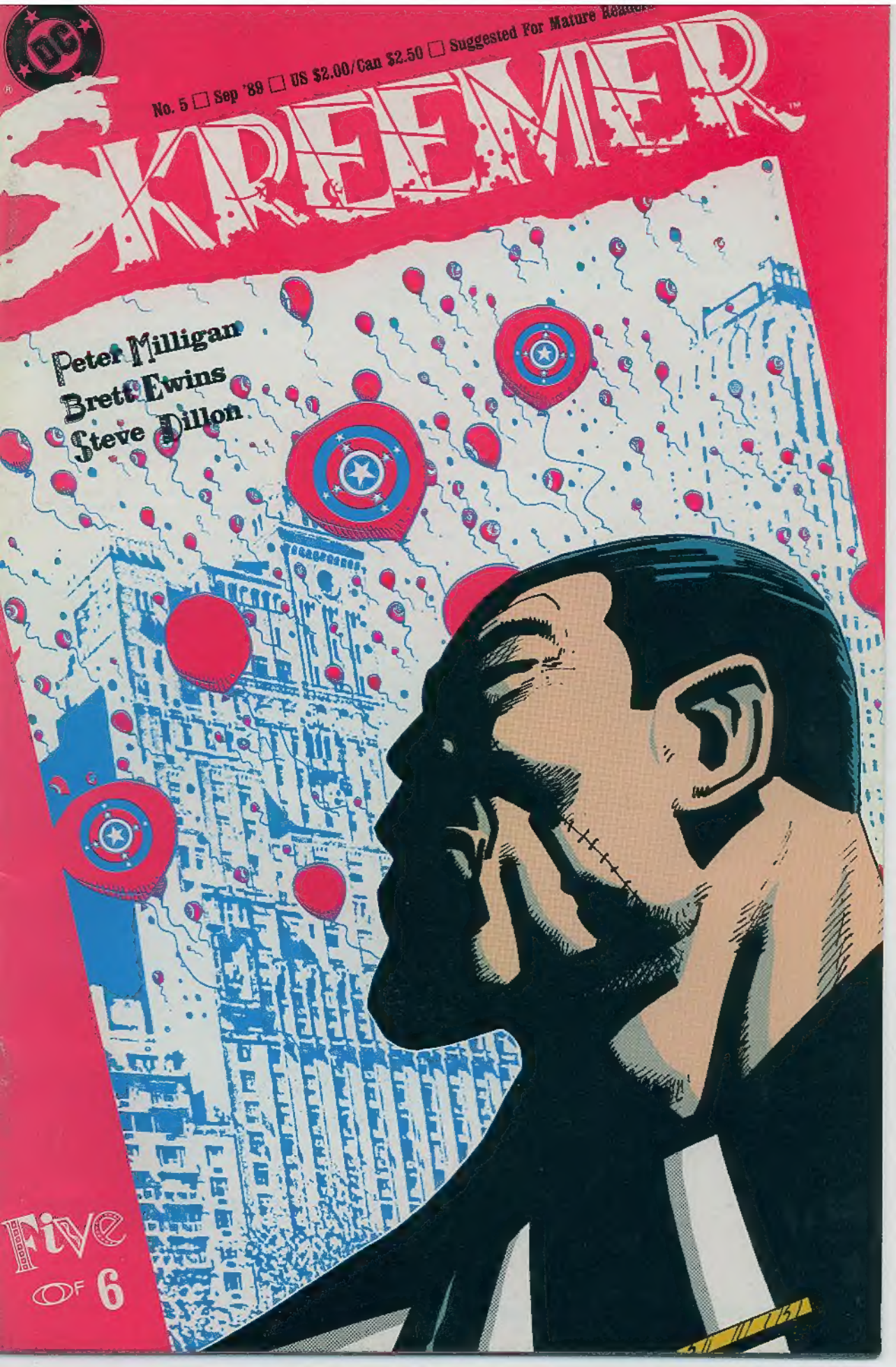
No. 5 ☐ Sep '89 ☐ US $2.00/Can $2.50 ☐ Suggested For Mature Readers
KREEMER
Peter Milligan
Brett Ewins
Steve Dillon
Five
OF 6

SKREEMER

Created by Peter Milligan & Brett Ewins

part five
"D'ye Think I'm Dead?"

Peter Milligan, writer

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Karen Berger, editor

SKREEMER 5
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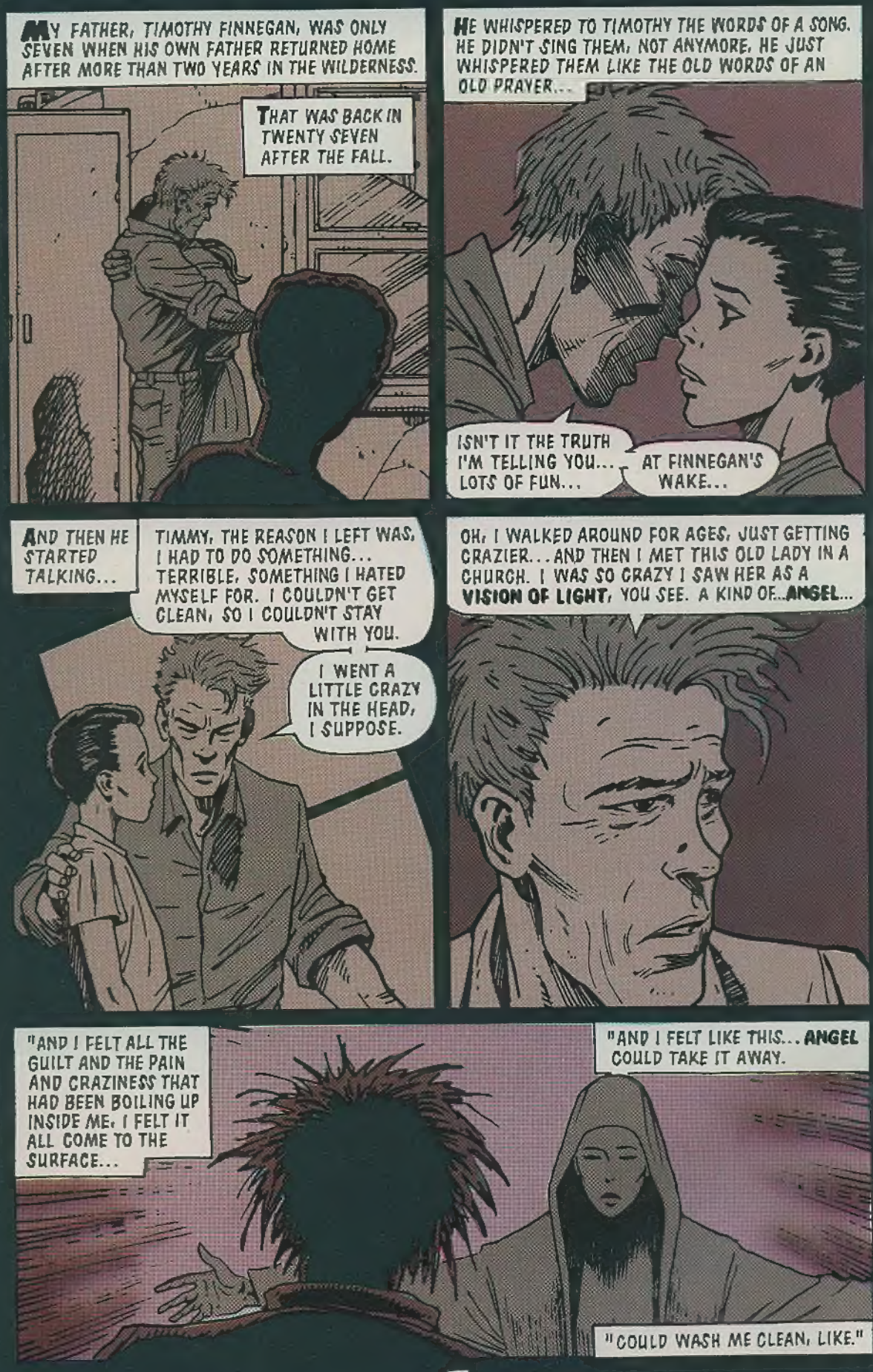
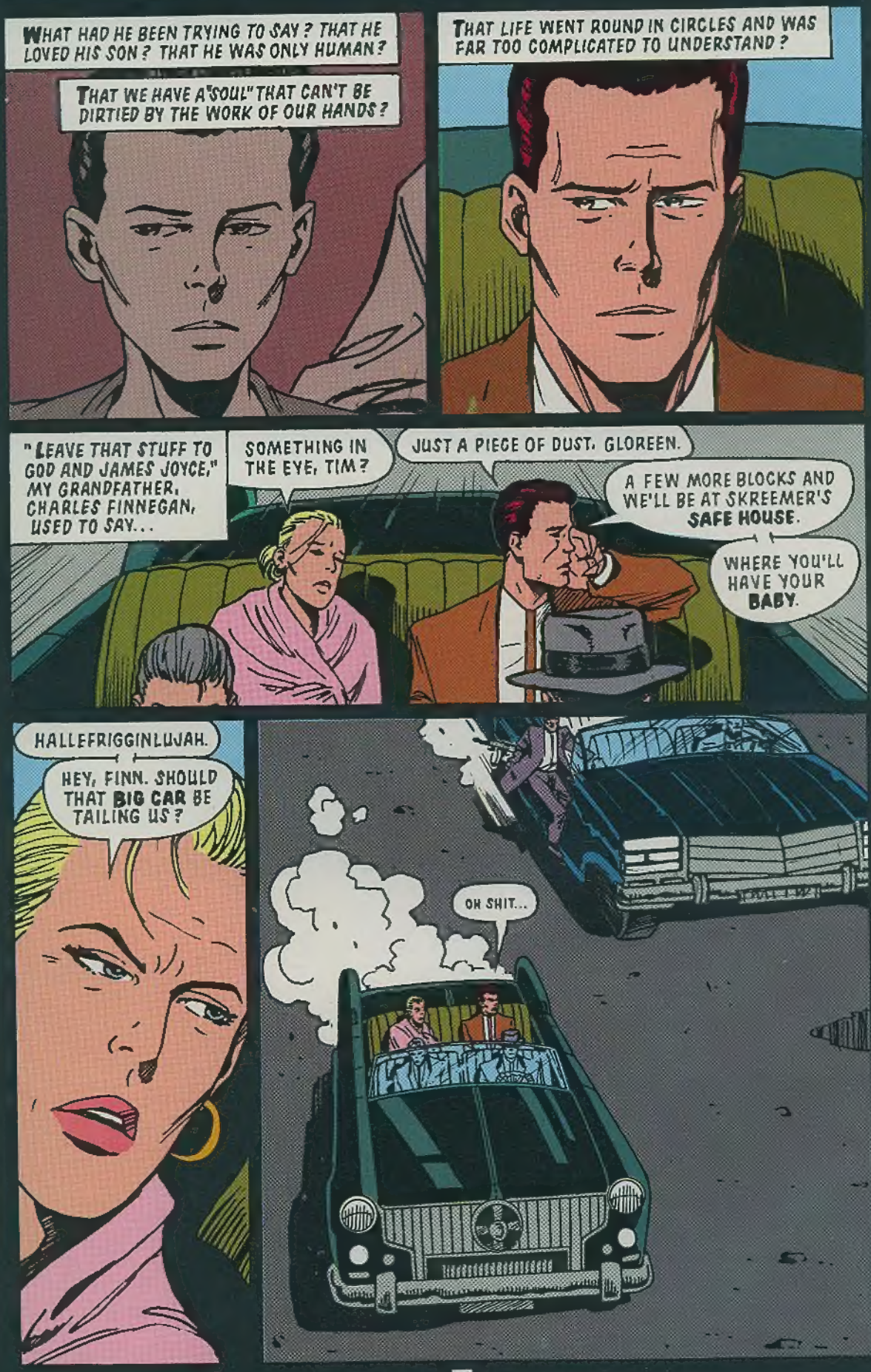
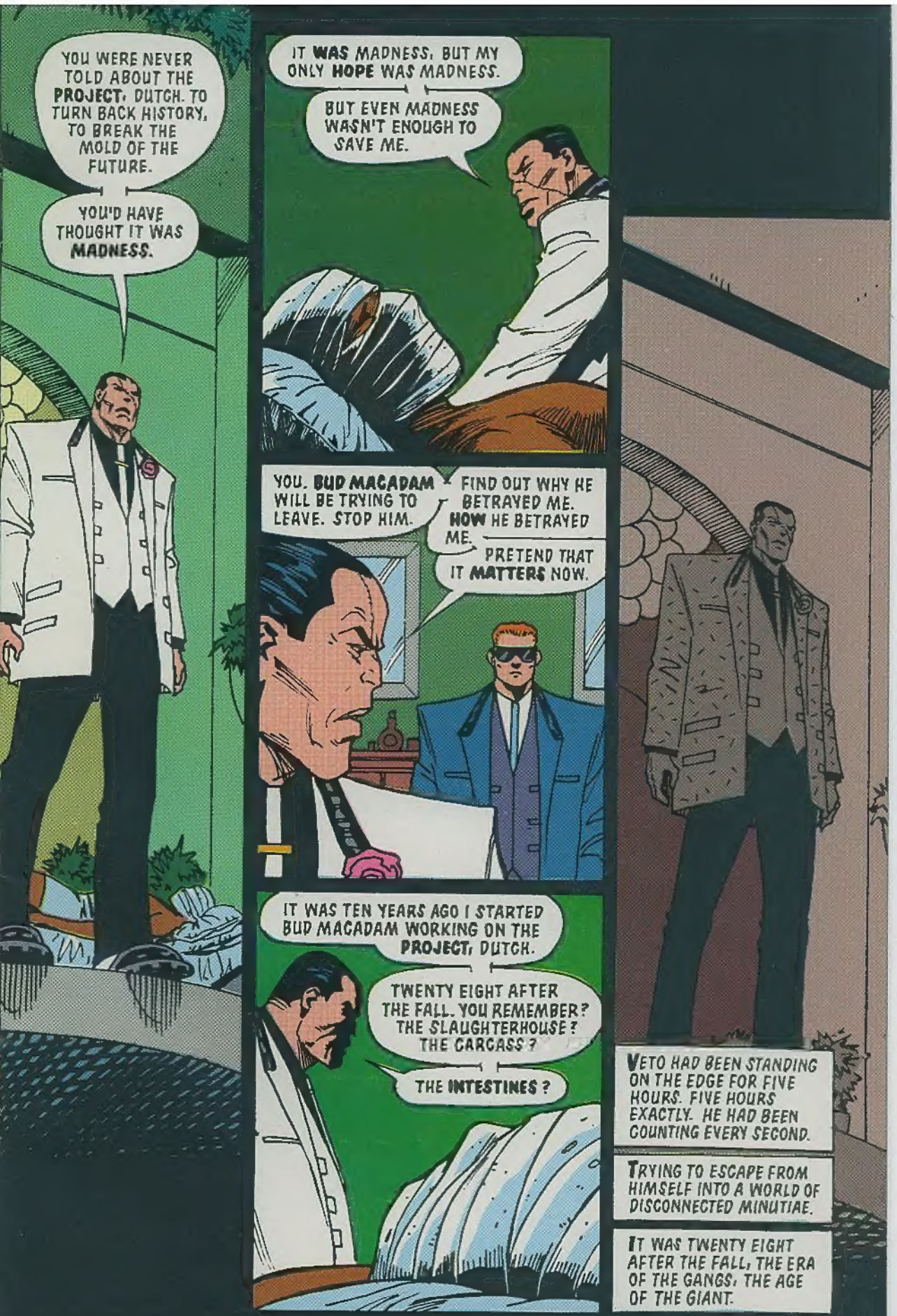

MY FATHER, TIMOTHY FINNEGAN, WAS ONLY SEVEN WHEN HIS OWN FATHER RETURNED HOME AFTER MORE THAN TWO YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS.
THAT WAS BACK IN TWENTY SEVEN AFTER THE FALL.
HE WHISPERED TO TIMOTHY THE WORDS OF A SONG. HE DIDN'T SING THEM, NOT ANYMORE. HE JUST WHISPERED THEM LIKE THE OLD WORDS OF AN OLD PRAYER...
ISN'T IT THE TRUTH I'M TELLING YOU... LOTS OF FUN...
AT FINNEGAN'S WAKE...
AND THEN HE STARTED TALKING...
TIMMY, THE REASON I LEFT WAS, I HAD TO DO SOMETHING... TERRIBLE. SOMETHING I HATED MYSELF FOR. I COULDN'T GET CLEAN, SO I COULDN'T STAY WITH YOU.
I WENT A LITTLE CRAZY IN THE HEAD, I SUPPOSE.
OH, I WALKED AROUND FOR AGES, JUST GETTING CRAZIER... AND THEN I MET THIS OLD LADY IN A CHURCH. I WAS SO CRAZY I SAW HER AS A VISION OF LIGHT, YOU SEE. A KIND OF...ANGEL...
"AND I FELT ALL THE GUILT AND THE PAIN AND CRAZINESS THAT HAD BEEN BOILING UP INSIDE ME. I FELT IT ALL COME TO THE SURFACE...
"AND I FELT LIKE THIS... ANGEL COULD TAKE IT AWAY.
"COULD WASH ME CLEAN, LIKE."

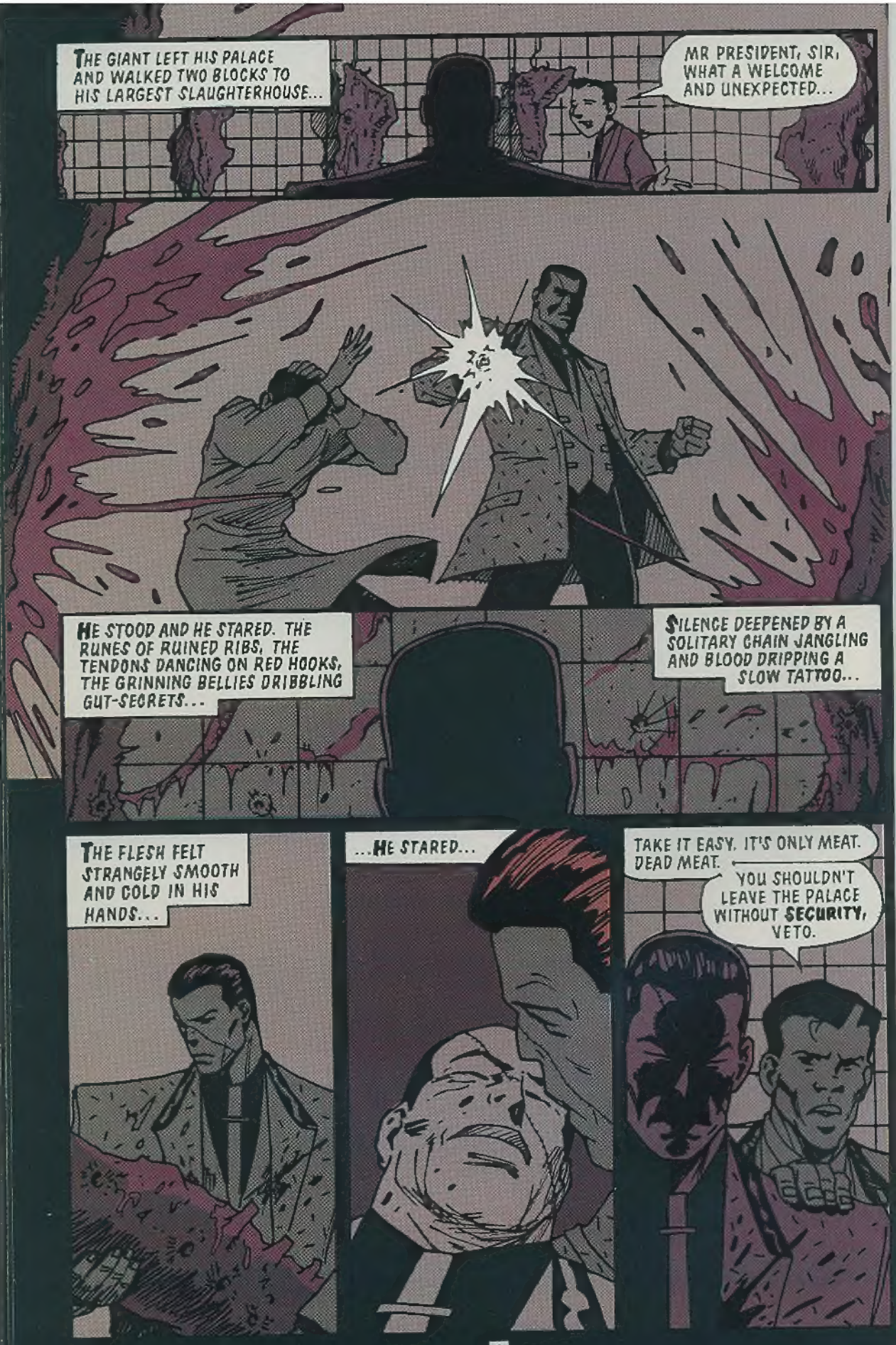
"BUT IT WAS ONLY MY CRAZINESS THAT MADE HER AN ANGEL. I LOOKED AGAIN AND SAW SHE WAS JUST AS DAMNED AND DESTROYED AS ME.
"I WENT TO TURN AWAY. I WAS DISGUSTED..."
...BUT THEN I REALIZED THAT... EVEN THOUGH SHE WAS RAVAGED AND RUINED, THERE WAS STILL SOME PART OF HER...INTACT, THAT HADN'T DIED...
AND I THOUGHT THAT MAYBE ALL REAL ANGELS ARE LIKE THAT. JUST ONE STEP AWAY FROM DAMNATION...
AND SO I THOUGHT THAT IF THERE WAS STILL SOME SPARK LEFT IN THIS TOOTHLESS HAG, THERE WAS STILL SOME HOPE LEFT FOR OLD CHARLIE FINNEGAN.
"I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU, TIMMY. I GUESS I'M TRYING TO SAY I'M SORRY I LEFT.
"I GUESS I'M TRYING TO SAY THAT YOUR DADDY'S BACK HOME."
WHEN I FIRST HELD YOU I TOLD YOU YOU WERE MY HOPE AND MY FUTURE, TIMMY. THAT HASN'T CHANGED NONE. YOU WON'T HAVE TO DO THE THINGS I HAD TO.
MAYBE ONE DAY YOU'LL UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY.


WHAT HAD HE BEEN TRYING TO SAY? THAT HE LOVED HIS SON? THAT HE WAS ONLY HUMAN?
THAT WE HAVE A "SOUL" THAT CAN'T BE DIRTIED BY THE WORK OF OUR HANDS?
THAT LIFE WENT ROUND IN CIRCLES AND WAS FAR TOO COMPLICATED TO UNDERSTAND?
"LEAVE THAT STUFF TO GOD AND JAMES JOYCE," MY GRANDFATHER, CHARLES FINNEGAN, USED TO SAY...
SOMETHING IN THE EYE, TIM?
JUST A PIECE OF DUST, GLOREEN.
A FEW MORE BLOCKS AND WE'LL BE AT SKREEMER'S SAFE HOUSE.
WHERE YOU'LL HAVE YOUR BABY.
HALLEFRIGGINLUJAH.
HEY, FINN. SHOULD THAT BIG CAR BE TAILING US?
OH SHIT...

DOWN!
TIM, THE DRIVER'S DEAD... THEY'RE GOING TO KILL US TIMMY THEY'RE GOING...
GET OFF ME... CAN'T GET... MY GODDAMN GUN OUT...
SAY CHEESE, MOTHERF...
AIIEEEE

JEEZ... MUST HAVE BEEN A ROGUE CAR GOT THROUGH OUR LINES.
YOU OKAY?
I'M OKAY, FINNEGAN.
DON'T KNOW ABOUT SKREEMER'S MONSTER THOUGH.


YOU WERE NEVER TOLD ABOUT THE PROJECT, DUTCH. TO TURN BACK HISTORY, TO BREAK THE MOLD OF THE FUTURE.
YOU'D HAVE THOUGHT IT WAS MADNESS.
IT WAS MADNESS, BUT MY ONLY HOPE WAS MADNESS.
BUT EVEN MADNESS WASN'T ENOUGH TO SAVE ME.
YOU. BUD MACADAM WILL BE TRYING TO LEAVE. STOP HIM.
FIND OUT WHY HE BETRAYED ME. HOW HE BETRAYED ME.
PRETEND THAT IT MATTERS NOW.
IT WAS TEN YEARS AGO I STARTED BUD MACADAM WORKING ON THE PROJECT, DUTCH.
TWENTY EIGHT AFTER THE FALL. YOU REMEMBER? THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE? THE CARCASS?
THE INTESTINES?
VETO HAD BEEN STANDING ON THE EDGE FOR FIVE HOURS. FIVE HOURS EXACTLY. HE HAD BEEN COUNTING EVERY SECOND.
TRYING TO ESCAPE FROM HIMSELF INTO A WORLD OF DISCONNECTED MINUTIAE.
IT WAS TWENTY EIGHT AFTER THE FALL, THE ERA OF THE GANGS, THE AGE OF THE GIANT.

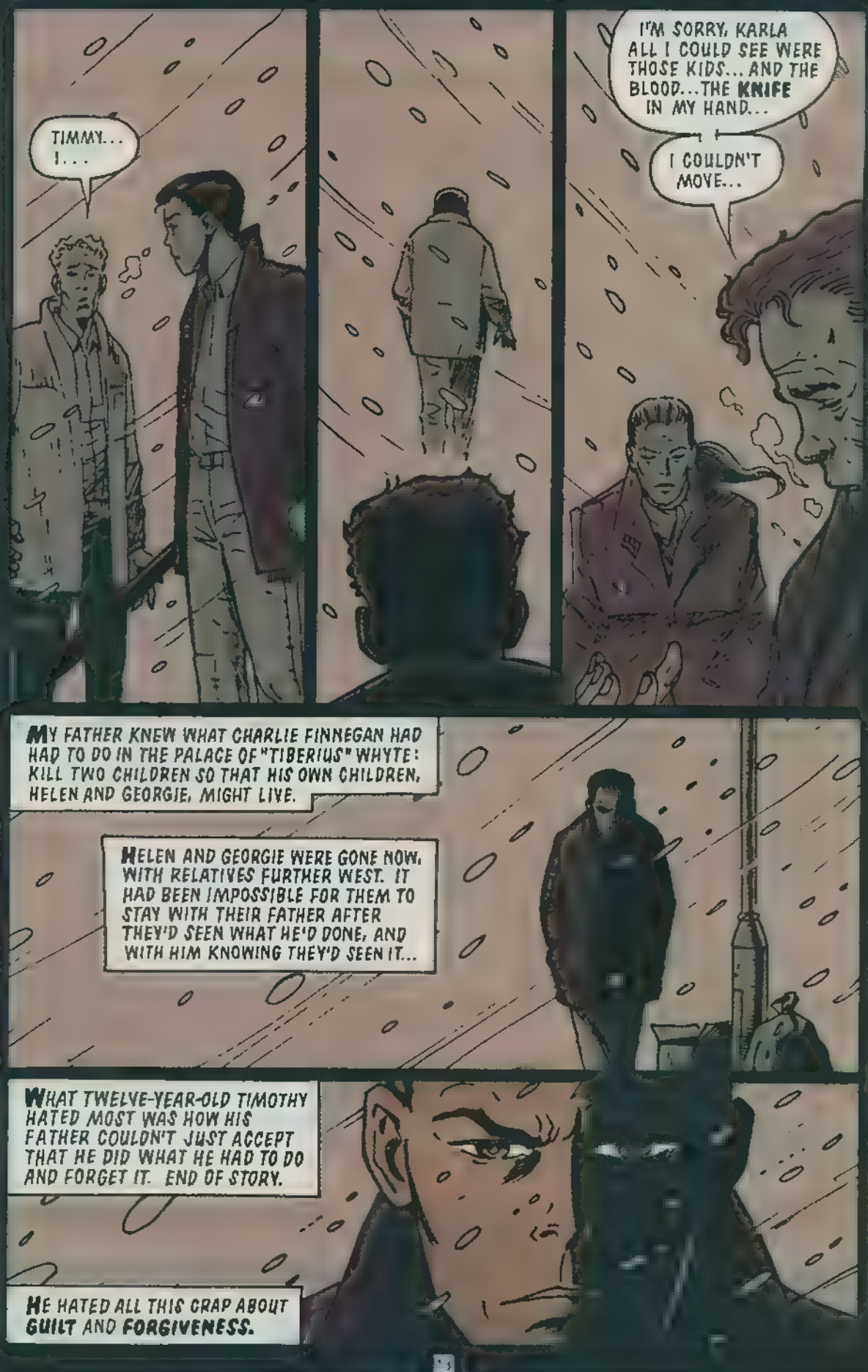

THE GIANT LEFT HIS PALACE AND WALKED TWO BLOCKS TO HIS LARGEST SLAUGHTERHOUSE...
MR PRESIDENT, SIR, WHAT A WELCOME AND UNEXPECTED...
HE STOOD AND HE STARED. THE RUNES OF RUINED RIBS, THE TENDONS DANCING ON RED HOOKS, THE GRINNING BELLIES DRIBBLING GUT-SECRETS...
SILENCE DEEPENED BY A SOLITARY CHAIN JANGLING AND BLOOD DRIPPING A SLOW TATTOO...
THE FLESH FELT STRANGELY SMOOTH AND COLD IN HIS HANDS...
...HE STARED...
TAKE IT EASY. IT'S ONLY MEAT. DEAD MEAT.
YOU SHOULDN'T LEAVE THE PALACE WITHOUT SECURITY, VETO.

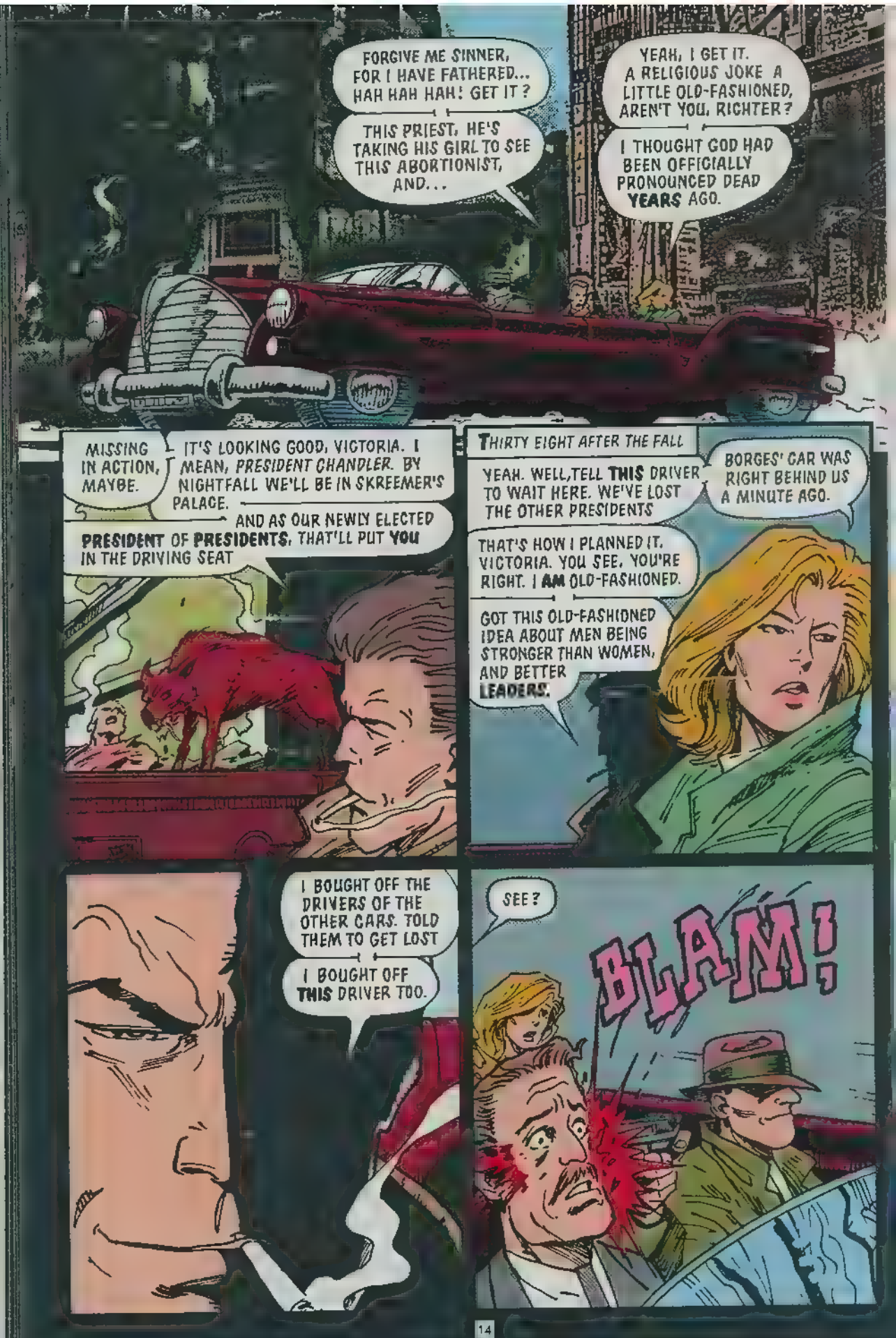
YOU TOOK ME BACK. I WAS COVERED IN BLOOD. GOOD OLD DUTCH, SO NERVOUS THAT SOMETHING WOULD HAPPEN TO ME. TO ME!
NOTHING EVER HAPPENED TO ME. WHAT'S THE POINT?
WHAT'S THE POINT, DUTCH? WE'RE BORN, WE LIVE, WE DIE. WHAT'S THE POINT?
I DON'T KNOW, VETO. MAYBE THE POINT IS TO TRY TO FIND A POINT...
BUT WHAT IF YOU KNOW YOU WON'T FIND ONE?
WHAT IF YOU KNOW YOU'RE DYING AND DOOMED THE MOMENT YOU'RE BORN. WHAT IF YOU KNOW YOU'RE DEAD MEAT?
YOU PRETEND YOU'RE NOT BUT YOU ARE, YOU ARE...
YOU ARE, DUTCH, YOU ARE.
I GRIPPED YOUR COLLAR, THEN I LOOKED AT MY HANDS, THEN I REMEMBERED THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE...
"THE RUBBERY KNOTS OF INTESTINES HANGING FROM THE RAFTERS OF THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE. LIKE BURST BALLOONS. LIKE BURST BALLOONS.
"AND I ASKED YOU...
"I ASKED YOU..."
BRING ME THE SCIENTIST. MACADAM, BUD MACADAM.
TELL HIM I'VE GOT A JOB FOR HIM. A LONG JOB.

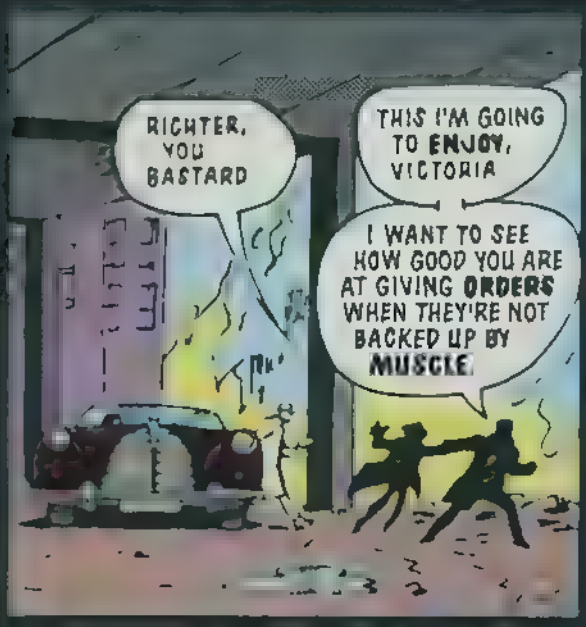
ARE YOU LISTENING, DUTCH? ARE YOU LISTENING?
MY FACE HURTS, VETO I DON'T WANNA LISTEN TO THIS CRAP. I DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT YOUR LIFE STORY...
ONE THING I WANNA REMEMBER ABOUT YOU IS THAT THANKS TO YOU I AIN'T GOT A FACE LEFT...
LET ME ALONE. LET ME TRY TO SLEEP. LET ME TRY TO DIE FOR GOD'S SAKE.
NO, DUTCH, YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN. YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I CAN SAY THIS TO. I HAVE TO SAY IT.
REMEMBER?
"REMEMBER YOU BROUGHT MACADAM TO ME, THOUGH YOU NEVER HAD ANY IDEA WHAT WE WERE PLANNING? ONLY MACADAM AND I KNEW."
MACADAM, IN ABOUT TEN YEARS THE CONDITIONS THAT MAKE THIS AGE WILL HAVE ALTERED. YOUR JOB IS TO STOP THAT.
OR RATHER, TO RECREATE ARTIFICIALLY THE PRESENT CONDITIONS.
YOUR JOB IS TO CREATE A WORLD THAT IS FOREVER FALLING.
FOR THE LAST TEN YEARS MACADAM HAS BEEN DEVELOPING MUTATED STRAINS OF PATHOGENIC BACTERIA... A POTPOURRI OF PLAGUES...
OF COURSE, VACCINES, BALMS, ANTIGENS, DRUGS, MEDICINES, THE ENTIRE DISEASE INDUSTRY WILL BE CONTROLLED BY ME..
A BEAUTIFUL PLAN TO CHEAT HISTORY KNEW IT WOULDN'T WORK, BUT HAD TO TRY. COULDN'T JUST LIE DOWN, EVEN THOUGH I WAS DEAD
FOR THE LAST TEN YEARS OUR AGENTS HAVE BEEN INFILTRATING OTHER GANGS, SLEEPERS SLOWLY PREPARING FOR THIS HOUR...
...THE HOUR THE BALLOONS, THE BALLOONS ALL BLOATED LIKE BLADDERS WITH THE SKREEMER PLAGUES...
THE HOUR THE BALLOONS.

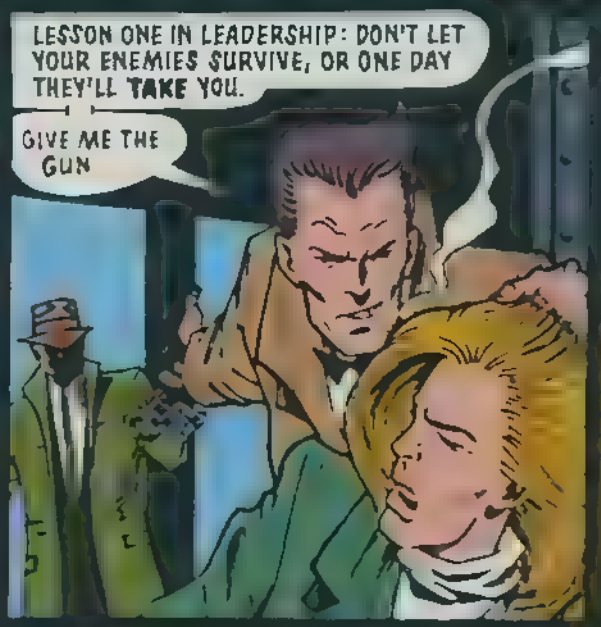
" SLOWLY RISE . "
HEY, FINNEGAN. TIM. GET A MOVE ON, WILL YOU? I'M ACHING ALL OVER...
OKAY, I'M COMING..
GET A MOVE ON, WILL YOU, TIMOTHY FINNEGAN.
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, I'M COMING..
THE WINTER OF THIRTY TWO AFTER THE FALL WAS A HARD ONE. THE COLD EVEN KILLED OFF SOME OF THE VIRUSES...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT BOY, KARLA
AH, IT'S JUST A STAGE HE'S GOING THROUGH, CHARLIE...
YEAH, WELL, MY BALLS ARE GONNA GO THROUGH A STAGE OF FALLING OFF IF HE DOESN'T MOVE HISSELF...
CHARLIE!
CHARLIE PLEASE!
O-OKAY... JUST GIMME WHATEVER YOU GOT... AND I WON'T HURT HER ..
C'MON! OR SHE GETS IT!
HUH?

DON'T JUST STAND THERE! GIMME YOUR FOOD! GIMME WHAT YOU GOT!
CHARLIE... PLEASE...
COME ON, THEN...
COME ON, YOU BASTARD...

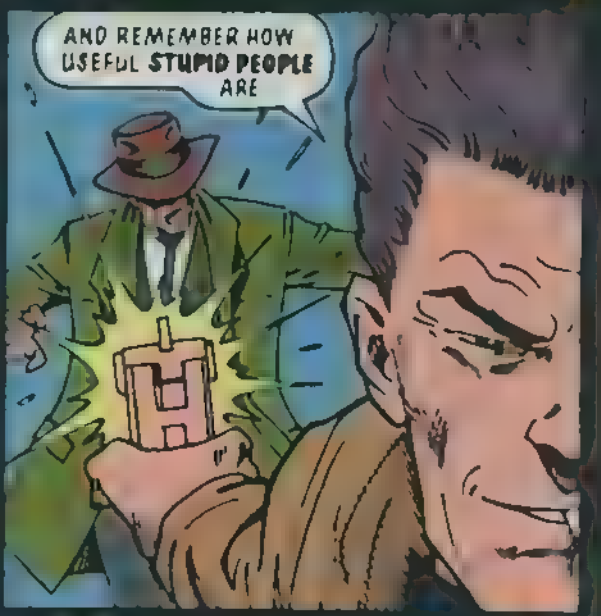

TIMMY... I...
I'M SORRY, KARLA ALL I COULD SEE WERE THOSE KIDS... AND THE BLOOD... THE KNIFE IN MY HAND...
I COULDN'T MOVE...
MY FATHER KNEW WHAT CHARLIE FINNEGAN HAD HAD TO DO IN THE PALACE OF "TIBERIUS" WHYTE: KILL TWO CHILDREN SO THAT HIS OWN CHILDREN, HELEN AND GEORGIE, MIGHT LIVE.
HELEN AND GEORGIE WERE GONE NOW, WITH RELATIVES FURTHER WEST. IT HAD BEEN IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO STAY WITH THEIR FATHER AFTER THEY'D SEEN WHAT HE'D DONE, AND WITH HIM KNOWING THEY'D SEEN IT...
WHAT TWELVE-YEAR-OLD TIMOTHY HATED MOST WAS HOW HIS FATHER COULDN'T JUST ACCEPT THAT HE DID WHAT HE HAD TO DO AND FORGET IT. END OF STORY.
HE HATED ALL THIS CRAP ABOUT GUILT AND FORGIVENESS.

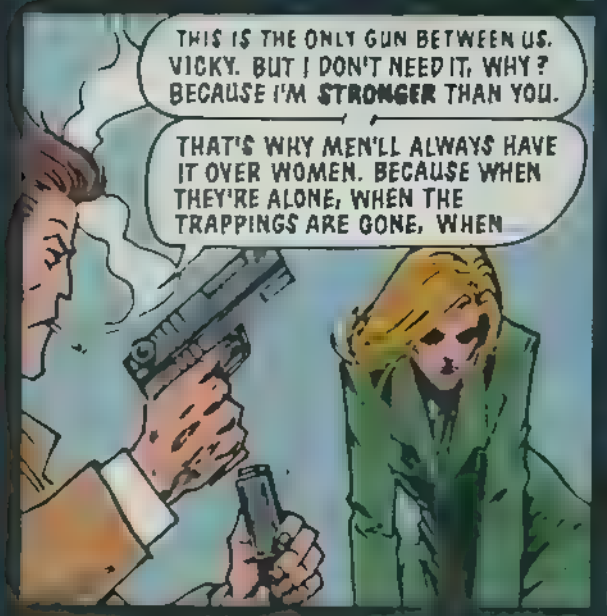

FORGIVE ME SINNER, FOR I HAVE FATHERED... HAH HAH HAH! GET IT?
THIS PRIEST, HE'S TAKING HIS GIRL TO SEE THIS ABORTIONIST, AND...
YEAH, I GET IT. A RELIGIOUS JOKE A LITTLE OLD-FASHIONED, AREN'T YOU, RICHTER?
I THOUGHT GOD HAD BEEN OFFICIALLY PRONOUNCED DEAD **YEARS** AGO.
MISSING IN ACTION, MAYBE.
IT'S LOOKING GOOD, VICTORIA. I MEAN, *PRESIDENT CHANDLER*. BY NIGHTFALL WE'LL BE IN SKREEMER'S PALACE.
AND AS OUR NEWLY ELECTED **PRESIDENT** OF **PRESIDENTS**, THAT'LL PUT **YOU** IN THE DRIVING SEAT
THIRTY EIGHT AFTER THE FALL
YEAH. WELL, TELL **THIS** DRIVER TO WAIT HERE. WE'VE LOST THE OTHER PRESIDENTS
BORGES' CAR WAS RIGHT BEHIND US A MINUTE AGO.
THAT'S HOW I PLANNED IT, VICTORIA. YOU SEE, YOU'RE RIGHT. I **AM** OLD-FASHIONED.
GOT THIS OLD-FASHIONED IDEA ABOUT MEN BEING STRONGER THAN WOMEN, AND BETTER **LEADERS**.
I BOUGHT OFF THE DRIVERS OF THE OTHER CARS. TOLD THEM TO GET LOST
I BOUGHT OFF **THIS** DRIVER TOO.
SEE?
BLAM!

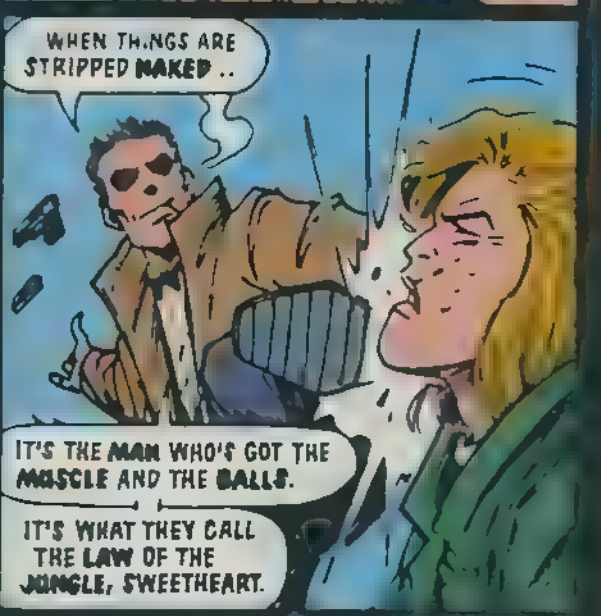

RICHTER, YOU BASTARD
THIS I'M GOING TO ENJOY, VICTORIA
I WANT TO SEE HOW GOOD YOU ARE AT GIVING ORDERS WHEN THEY'RE NOT BACKED UP BY MUSCLE.


LESSON ONE IN LEADERSHIP: DON'T LET YOUR ENEMIES SURVIVE, OR ONE DAY THEY'LL TAKE YOU.
GIVE ME THE GUN

LESSON TWO IN LEADERSHIP WHEN YOU DO SOMETHING DIRTY, KEEP WITNESSES DOWN TO A MINIMUM.


AND REMEMBER HOW USEFUL STUPID PEOPLE ARE


THIS IS THE ONLY GUN BETWEEN US, VICKY. BUT I DON'T NEED IT, WHY? BECAUSE I'M STRONGER THAN YOU.
THAT'S WHY MEN'LL ALWAYS HAVE IT OVER WOMEN. BECAUSE WHEN THEY'RE ALONE, WHEN THE TRAPPINGS ARE GONE, WHEN

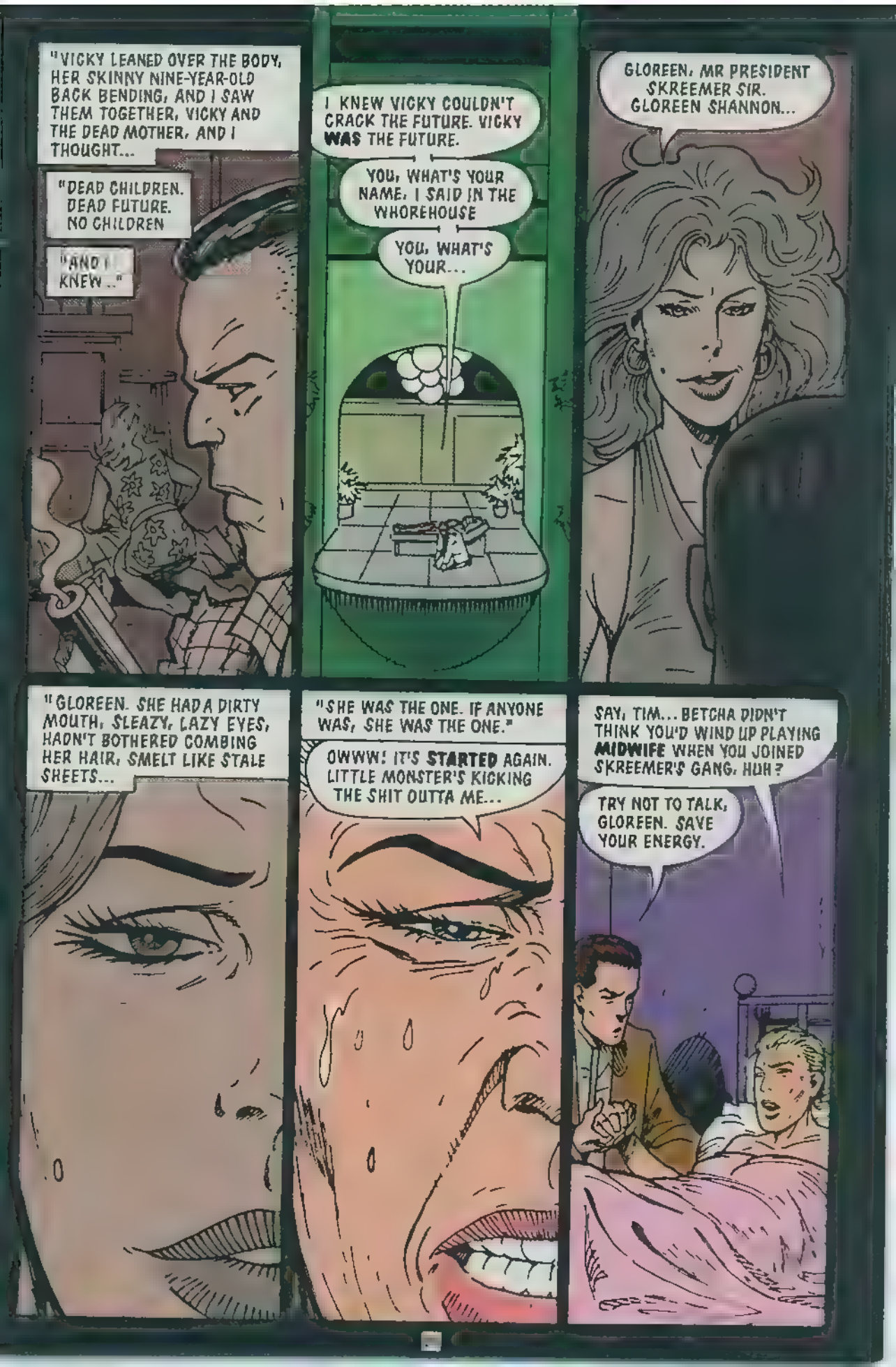

WHEN THINGS ARE STRIPPED NAKED ..
IT'S THE MAN WHO'S GOT THE MUSCLE AND THE BALLS.
IT'S WHAT THEY CALL THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE, SWEETHEART.

RICHTER... I'M GOING TO KILL YOU FOR THIS...
I DON'T THINK SO, VICTORIA. AFTER I'VE FINISHED WITH YOU YOU WON'T BE IN A FIT STATE TO KILL .
. ANYONE
GRRR RRR RRRR
UHHH N-NICE DOGGY . G-GOOD BOY...
S-STAY... STAY THERE, BOY .
STAY R-RIGHT... WHERE YOU ARE, BOY...
SO I CAN BLOW YOUR FRIGGIN...
KLIK!
SHIT!

AAEELIGH!
H-HELPP... UGHHH...
V-VICKY... HELP MEEE...
ENJOY YOUR JUNGLE, ASSHOLE...
IT WAS THIRTY EIGHT AFTER THE FALL...
BULLETS AND SHELLS CRACKED LIKE THUNDER ACROSS THE CITY...
AS THE CONFEDERATION OF GANGS PUSHED FOR THE HEART OF SKREEMER'S EMPIRE...

THUNDER PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN GIOVANNI VICO'S THEORY OF THE CYCLICAL NATURE OF HISTORY . .
THUNDER WAS THE VOICE OF GOD, MARKING THE FALL, FIRING THE WHEEL . . .
IT WAS THUNDER THAT FIRST DROVE HUMANS TO HIDE FOR COVER, TO HUDDLE TOGETHER FOR PROTECTION...
IT WAS FROM THE FEAR OF THUNDER THAT RELIGION ITSELF WAS BORN. .
THE THUNDER SHOOK THE WORLD...
...AND THE PEOPLE LOOKED FOR COMFORT
IN THIRTY FIVE AFTER THE FALL THERE WAS NOT YET THUNDER... BUT THE CRACKS IN THE AGE WERE BEGINNING TO SHOW...
GANGS TO THE NORTH AND EAST GETTING CLOSER EVERY DAY, VETO. CALLING THEMSELVES THE LAW AND ORDER GANGS.
AND VICKY'S BEEN MADE PRESIDENT AT LAST.

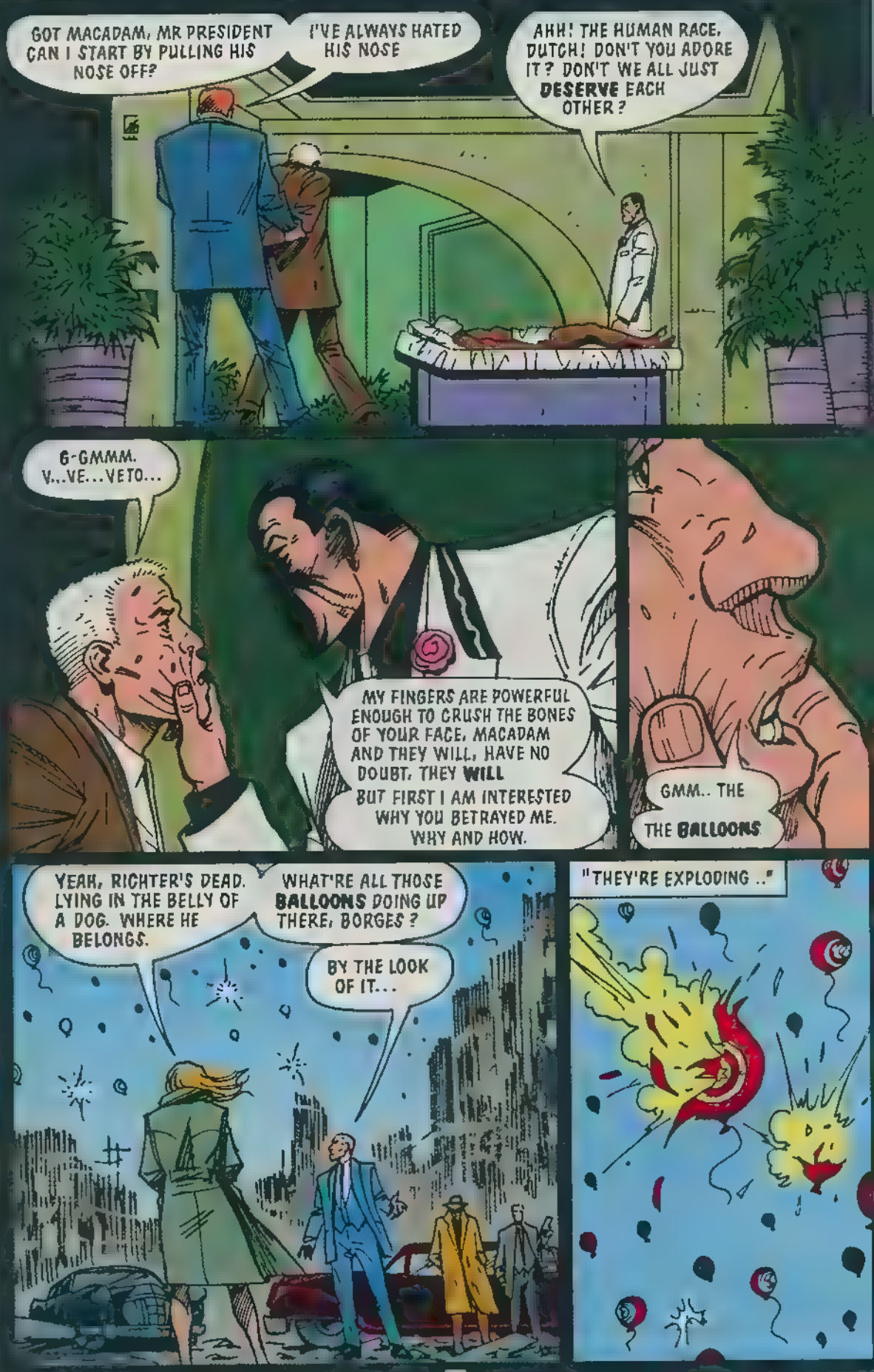
SHE'S COMING BACK TO HAUNT YOU, VETO. MAYBE ONE DAY YOU'LL BE SORRY YOU KICKED HER OUT.
MADE AN ENEMY OF HER INSTEAD OF A LOVER.
WHAT THE HELL ARE WE DOING IN THIS PISSPOT WHOREHOUSE ANYWAY?
I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE. SOMEONE TO CRACK THE FUTURE.
I WANT TO HAVE A CHILD, DUTCH.
A CHILD, DUTCH. IF I COULD HAVE A CHILD, A NORMAL, HEALTHY, LIVING CHILD, EVERYTHING WOULD BE DIFFERENT. THE CHAINS WOULD BE GONE. I'D BE FREE.
IT'D BE LIKE GIVING A EUNUCH HIS BALLS BACK.
THAT'S WHY VICKY HAD TO GO.
DO YOU REMEMBER THAT DAY, OUR FIRST REAL HIT ON THAT SMALL TIME DRUG OUTFIT?
VICKY SAID I WAS MAD... YOU SAID I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT...
"THE PREGNANT WOMAN, SHE PLEADED. BUT I SHOT HER. PUMPED BULLETS INTO HER BELLY, INTO THE FUTURE GROWING THERE .."

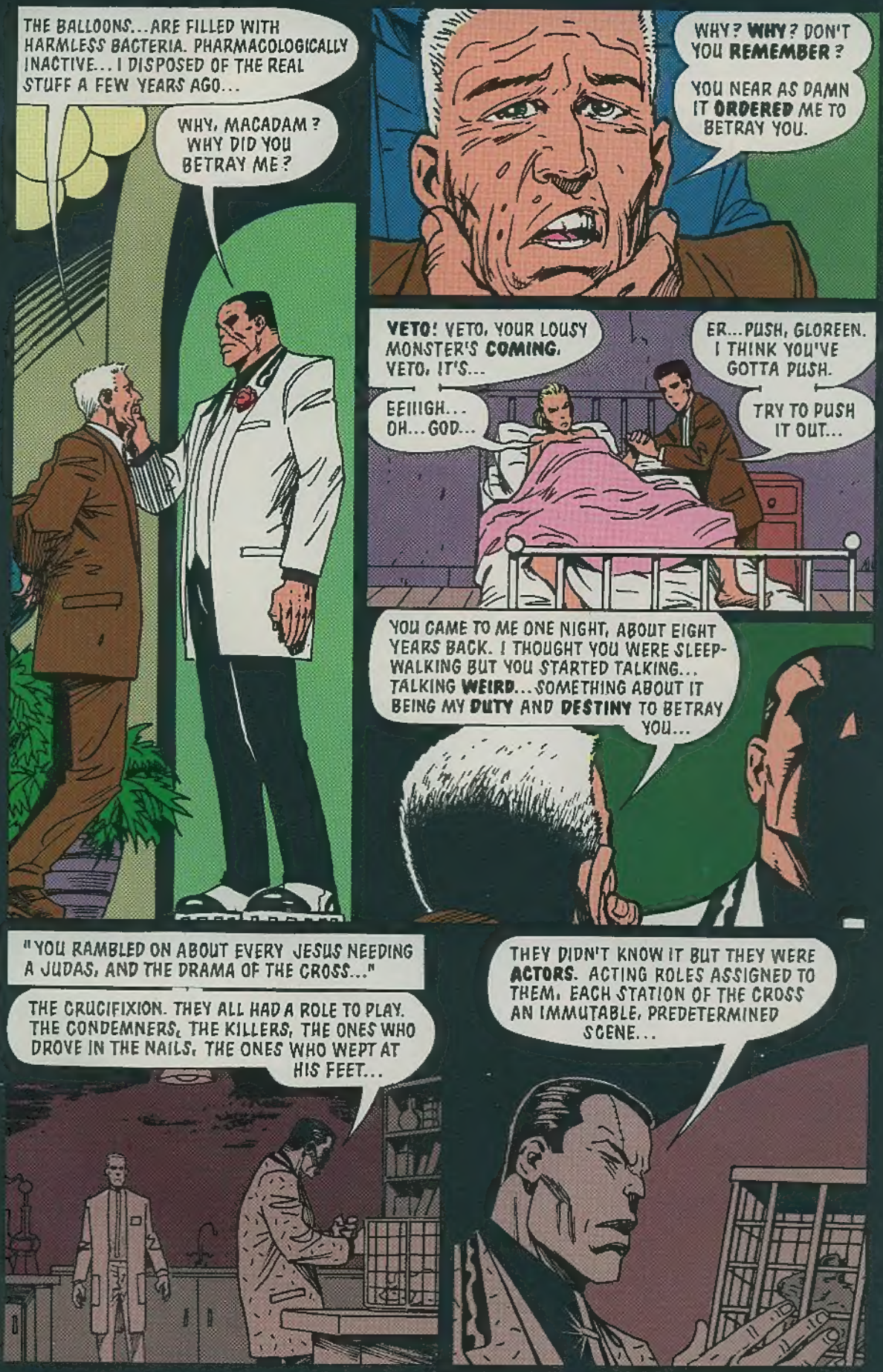

"VICKY LEANED OVER THE BODY, HER SKINNY NINE-YEAR-OLD BACK BENDING, AND I SAW THEM TOGETHER, VICKY AND THE DEAD MOTHER, AND I THOUGHT...
"DEAD CHILDREN. DEAD FUTURE. NO CHILDREN
"AND I KNEW..."
I KNEW VICKY COULDN'T CRACK THE FUTURE. VICKY **WAS** THE FUTURE.
YOU, WHAT'S YOUR NAME. I SAID IN THE WHOREHOUSE
YOU, WHAT'S YOUR...
GLOREEN. MR PRESIDENT SKREEMER SIR. GLOREEN SHANNON...
"GLOREEN. SHE HAD A DIRTY MOUTH, SLEAZY, LAZY EYES, HADN'T BOTHERED COMBING HER HAIR, SMELT LIKE STALE SHEETS...
"SHE WAS THE ONE. IF ANYONE WAS, SHE WAS THE ONE."
OWWW! IT'S **STARTED** AGAIN. LITTLE MONSTER'S KICKING THE SHIT OUTTA ME...
SAY, TIM... BETCHA DIDN'T THINK YOU'D WIND UP PLAYING **MIDWIFE** WHEN YOU JOINED SKREEMER'S GANG, HUH?
TRY NOT TO TALK, GLOREEN. SAVE YOUR ENERGY.

AH. I GET IT. A JOKE A STUPID JOKE
GOOD GOD, FOR ONE MINUTE I THOUGHT YOU WAS SERIOUS, TIM. I FELT LIKE THE FINNEGAN IN THE OLD SONG WHO DROPPED DOWN DEAD BUT...
I AM SERIOUS, DAD
I'M GOING TO WORK FOR SKREEMER.
THIRTY SIX AFTER THE FALL
NO! I WON'T LET YOU! IT'S AGAINST EVERYTHING I WORKED FOR, EVERYTHING I BELIEVED IN.
YOU WERE MY HOPE, TIMMY. MY FUTURE. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE ONE OF THEM...
GET OFF ME, YOU OLD...
UNGGGG
...FOOL!

I'M SICK OF YOU SICK OF BEING YOUR HOPE AND YOUR FUTURE. I'M NOT I'M JUST NORMAL.
I WANNA HAVE FUN. I WANNA EAT AND DRINK AND SCREW AROUND AND NOT HAVE TO STRUGGLE ALL MY LIFE LIKE YOU
BEING ONE OF THEM'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN DO THAT
ALL MY LIFE I'VE HEARD NOTHING BUT YOUR STUPID SONG, AND THAT STUPID CRAP ABOUT RIGHT AND WRONG...
WELL, MAYBE IF YOU'D DONE A FEW MORE WRONG THINGS YOU'D HAVE MORE FAMILY ALIVE TODAY
YOU LOUSY BASTARD I'LL...
GO ON! HIT ME! BREAK MY NOSE! KNOCK MY GODDAMN TEETH OUT!
GO ON. IT'LL MAKE ME HAPPY!
GET GET OUT OF MY SIGHT
I'LL SEND YOU AND MA FOOD AND DRUGS. LIKE YOU SHOULD HAVE DONE. YOU CAN TAKE THEM OR LEAVE THEM
THAT'S YOUR CHOICE, LITTLE FINNEGAN.
MY FATHER, TIMOTHY FINNEGAN, JOINED VETO SKREEMER WHEN HE WAS SIXTEEN YEARS OLD, A PRETTY USUAL AGE FOR ENLISTMENT.
MY GRANDFATHER WAS BY THEN NEARING SIXTY.
YOU KNOW, WHEN I MET THAT OLD WOMAN IN THE CHURCH .. WHEN I CAME HOME TO YOU... I FIGURED IT WAS SOMEHOW BEHIND ME.
OH, I DIDN'T FEEL PURE OR ANYTHING. I STILL HAVE THE NIGHTMARES...
BUT I THOUGHT THAT ONE DAY I'D BE ABLE TO STOP HURTING.

I WAS WRONG, WASN'T I? IT'LL NEVER STOP. I'M COVERED IN THE SHIT OF DEATH AND IT STINKS TO HIGH HEAVEN.
I MADE MY CHOICE. I KILLED THOSE TWO CHILDREN. TIM'S MADE HIS CHOICE. HE'S GOING TO BECOME A KILLER, TOO.
STOP IT, CHARLIE. YOU'RE ONLY HURTING YOURSELF...
NO, KARLA. MY WHOLE LIFE'S BEEN A WASTE. A STUPID OLD BARROOM SONG. LOTS OF FUN AT FINNEGAN'S WAKE! IT'S A LIE, THAT SONG. MY SONG. THE DEAD DON'T COME BACK.
THEY STAY DEAD, LIKE OUR KATIE, LIKE OUR FIRST TIMMY, LIKE THE KIDS I SLAUGHTERED...
"THEY ROT AND MOLD AND STINK AND STAY DEAD, LIKE WE WILL. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU DO, DOESN'T MATTER WHAT CHOICES YOU MAKE, THERE ARE NEVER ANY HAPPY ENDINGS..."
IN THE END WE DIE, AND WE STAY DEAD.
GO FETCH ME THE WHISKEY, KARLA. I THINK IT'S TIME I STARTED DRINKING AGAIN.
BBAAAAAAAAM
CLOSER. THEY'RE GETTING CLOSER. VICKY'S COMING HOME, DUTCH. WE'LL ALL BE TOGETHER SOON.
THE LONGEST FUNERAL IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD IS COMING TO AN END.


GOT MACADAM, MR PRESIDENT CAN I START BY PULLING HIS NOSE OFF?
I'VE ALWAYS HATED HIS NOSE
AHH! THE HUMAN RACE, DUTCH! DON'T YOU ADORE IT? DON'T WE ALL JUST DESERVE EACH OTHER?
G-GMMM. V...VE...VETO...
MY FINGERS ARE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO CRUSH THE BONES OF YOUR FACE, MACADAM AND THEY WILL, HAVE NO DOUBT. THEY WILL
BUT FIRST I AM INTERESTED WHY YOU BETRAYED ME. WHY AND HOW.
GMM.. THE
THE BALLOONS
YEAH, RICHTER'S DEAD. LYING IN THE BELLY OF A DOG. WHERE HE BELONGS.
WHAT'RE ALL THOSE BALLOONS DOING UP THERE, BORGES?
BY THE LOOK OF IT...
"THEY'RE EXPLODING .."


THE BALLOONS... ARE FILLED WITH HARMLESS BACTERIA. PHARMACOLOGICALLY INACTIVE... I DISPOSED OF THE REAL STUFF A FEW YEARS AGO...
WHY, MACADAM? WHY DID YOU BETRAY ME?
WHY? WHY? DON'T YOU REMEMBER?
YOU NEAR AS DAMN IT ORDERED ME TO BETRAY YOU.
VETO! VETO, YOUR LOUSY MONSTER'S COMING. VETO, IT'S...
EEIIIGH... OH... GOD...
ER... PUSH, GLOREEN. I THINK YOU'VE GOTTA PUSH.
TRY TO PUSH IT OUT...
YOU CAME TO ME ONE NIGHT, ABOUT EIGHT YEARS BACK. I THOUGHT YOU WERE SLEEP-WALKING BUT YOU STARTED TALKING... TALKING WEIRD... SOMETHING ABOUT IT BEING MY DUTY AND DESTINY TO BETRAY YOU...
"YOU RAMBLED ON ABOUT EVERY JESUS NEEDING A JUDAS, AND THE DRAMA OF THE CROSS..."
THE CRUCIFIXION. THEY ALL HAD A ROLE TO PLAY. THE CONDEMNERS, THE KILLERS, THE ONES WHO DROVE IN THE NAILS, THE ONES WHO WEPT AT HIS FEET...
THEY DIDN'T KNOW IT BUT THEY WERE ACTORS. ACTING ROLES ASSIGNED TO THEM. EACH STATION OF THE CROSS AN IMMUTABLE, PREDETERMINED SCENE...

YOU TOLD ME MY ROLE WAS TO MAKE SURE THE PROJECT DIDN'T SUCCEED... BUT WE HAD TO GO ON PRETENDING, JUST LIKE ACTORS IN A PLAY PRETEND THEY'RE NOT JUST ACTING BUT REALLY LIVING...
I GOT THE MESSAGE. I'M NOT STUPID. I MESSED UP THE PROJECT... AND WE WENT ON PRETENDING, FOR YEARS...
BUT...TOWARDS THE END I GOT WORRIED. FIGURED YOU'D FORGOTTEN WE WERE ACTING, OR YOU COULDN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ACTING AND REALITY ANYMORE...
THAT'S WHY I WAS TRYING TO LEAVE, VETO. BUT I DIDN'T BETRAY YOU.
I MAY HAVE DRIVEN THE NAILS IN... BUT YOU GAVE ME THE NAILS...
AND YOU CRIED OUT FOR THEM.
YOU...
AIIIIII
HGHHHHH HHHH HHH

COME ON, DUTCH. WE'RE GOING HIGHER.
WHERE I CAN TELL YOU EVERYTHING.
I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT ENTRAILS AND BLOOD AND STRANGE TATTOOS...
I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT CLOUDS WITH FACES. THE WHISPERS OF CHARRED BUILDINGS.
THE GUTS OF DEAD FATHERS AS THE LIGHT SLOWLY FADES...
I WANT TO TELL YOU EVERYTHING, DUTCH. THE RED SHEETS, THE EMPTINESS BENEATH ME, THE MARK OF A SCALPEL.
I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE FIRST PERSON I EVER KILLED, DUTCH.

MY MOTHER, DUTCH.
I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE DAY I KILLED MY MOTHER.
Next: "Finnegan's Wake."